My Experiences With The Holy Ghost

By A Member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Back in the 1970s after I joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and started doing genealogy, I had some interesting experiences that I will never forget.

After I moved from Missouri to Texas, each year I would make yearly trips back to Missouri to visit family and do genealogy work. One trip I visited the Bowen Cemetery in Buchanan County just outside of St. Joseph. I was told my 2nd great grandmother, Rebecca Bowen Butler, was buried there. After a little searching in the cemetery, I found Rebecca and wrote down all the data from her gravestone. I noticed she was buried near two other people named Bowen, a man and a woman. Being new to genealogy research, I didn't realize the importance of writing down the data on these other two Bowen's. I was thrilled to find Rebecca and when I went back to Texas, I added her information to my group sheets. As time went on, I got to thinking about the other two Bowen's. By now, I had forgotten their names. "Something" kept telling me I needed to go back to the cemetery in Missouri and write down their information. I didn't plan on another Missouri visit for a year. All the next year that "something" kept after me about needing to record the information on those two Bowen's. It wouldn't let me forget about them. Finally, the next year came and I made my Missouri trip. I went back to the Bowen Cemetery and recorded all the gravestone data on Ephraim and Catherine Bowen. When I returned to Texas and did some research, I discovered that Ephraim and Catherine were my 3rd great grandparents, Rebecca's parents! Again, I was thrilled that I could get Rebecca

sealed to her parents! That “something” that had told me to go back to Missouri to record the data on those two Bowen’s never happened again. I realized then it was the Holy Ghost giving me direction to help me link my family and do their temple work.

1990’s

During another trip to Missouri, my sister Paula and I were just driving around St. Joseph, enjoying being together. She asked me if I would like to go to the Memorial Park Cemetery and visit the grave of our brother. I said great and off we went. This cemetery is a very large one and Paula had to find the right road in the cemetery to turn on. She was unsure exactly how far to drive up the road so she drove very slowly while she looked out of the driver side window. I entertained myself by looking out the passenger window at the gravestones lining the road which were flat on the ground. Then a name caught my eye, Kerns. I told Paula to stop and saw that it was our aunt and uncle, Alberta and Harry Kerns stone. But there was another name on the same stone that I wasn’t familiar with, Janet. Looking closer I saw that Janet died as a baby, born and died on the same day. I told Paula that I didn’t know if I had Janet in my genealogy file so I wrote Janet’s data down. We finished our visiting at the cemetery that day and went back to Paula’s house. I checked my genealogy file and there was no Janet recorded. I told Paula about the discovery. We both knew it was NOT a coincidence about how we found Janet that day. Janet WANTED to be found! We went to the cemetery that day to visit another grave and accidently found Janet’s grave. How is it that I just happened to be looking

out of the window just as we drove by her grave in this huge cemetery with thousands of people buried there? Again, the Holy Ghost led me to Janet’s grave. Soon thereafter I had Janet sealed to her parents.

In the early 1990's sometime, I had gotten a computer and had the Internet but you may remember it was quite different back then. Doing genealogy on the Internet still lacked a lot to be desired and the computers were slow. One day I decided to try and find some Nigh's on a website containing an 1880 census in Texas. This was not indexed so I started looking through the whole census. Since I was looking for the name Nigh, I just hit the "page down" key, quickly scanned the page for that name and hit the key again. I was moving through the census very fast, scan, click, scan, click. After a time, a name shot out at me, "Ulum." Ulum! I was looking for Nigh! Even though the spelling was a variation from the spelling I was used to seeing, "Ullom," I knew I needed to look at it. I soon realized I had found my widowed 2nd great grandmother, Mary, with five of her surviving children. The six-year-old daughter, Rosa, I did not have in my genealogy file! I had wondered where this family had gone. Their sad story of the move from Missouri to Texas is included in another story. I felt I was led to find this family, this Rosa, by that power I was yet to have more experiences with.

2012

One experience I had was during a time of turmoil in my life. I had been diligently pleading and praying to Heavenly Father daily during this time for strength. What I had been praying about is too personal to express here.

One night as I lay in my bed in the quiet, dark of the room, I distinctly heard a man's voice in my head say three words to me. I will not say what the words were but he spoke calmly with authority and clearly. I immediately knew I had heard the voice of the Holy Ghost. I knew this wasn't my voice just thinking to myself because of the male gender of the voice. I also knew I never used that kind of terminology. What this voice told me gave me great strength and allowed me to make some important decisions that I had been pondering. Many times over the years I had felt the promptings of the Holy Ghost but this was the first time I had ever actually heard his voice. It will be something I can never forget nor deny.

2013

Just a few months after the previous experience, I had been trying to deal with extreme feelings of loss after problems developed between a friend and I. I had lost the friendship of this person. I had been in anguish about this situation and was becoming very depressed and bitter. Again, I was lying in bed wondering what I was to do and how to handle the situation so I could get over this. These words of wisdom came to me, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." No voice spoke. The words just came into my mind. I knew this was another way the Holy Ghost was giving me inspiration.

My Experience with Research on Edwin Brandell

I've always said there are no coincidences in genealogy. Yesterday, Saturday September 9th 2019, my husband, Richard, and I made a trip from our home in St Joseph, Missouri to Kansas City to visit the World War I Memorial

and Museum. I've wanted to do this for several years so I could see my great uncle, Edwin Brandell's name on the bronze memorial wall. On our way to the museum, we were traveling on Interstate 70 and I noticed off to the right that there was an old, pretty, brick church with a green topped steeple. I made a comment to Richard, who was driving, about the church and then I just happened to comment about the large AT&T building near the church. These were just part of a casual conversation we were having as we drove. To myself, I noted the big green signs of a Commerce Bank near there also. These observations had no meaning at the time.

Over a number of years I've done extensive research on Edwin and all this time felt a closeness to him. As a kid, I do remember his wife, my great aunt who is my biological aunt, but she never spoke of him. I was not close to my aunt but remember her coming to visit us a couple of times. Aunt Hazel did retain Brandell as her name even though she had several failed marriages after Edwin died. Since he died at age 28 during the war, I had to really dig to find his records. He was born in Sweden so that complicated finding records on him too.

Back to what I wanted to tell… We did find Edwin's name on the beautiful bronze wall and Richard took a photo of me next to the name. We had a nice visit touring exhibits then we left. Today, the 10th of September 2019 I decided to do some more research on Edwin to see if I could find anything that might have a photo of him. That's a primary goal for me. While looking at a source I had found on him a couple of years ago, I got to thinking

about the address listed in his military record which was the last address for him:

901 E 12TH ST KANSAS CITY, MO

Many times I have looked up ancestors addresses in Google Earth just for the fun of it to see if their houses were still there and what the areas looked like. I decided to do this with Edwin's address. When I plugged in the address and Google came down so I could see the area on street view, I was a little disappointed because the address was right under a freeway and no residences were around, only commercial buildings. Anyway, wanting to see the area where he lived I virtually "traveled" down E. 12th Street and went under the freeway to the other side. Much to my amazement, I saw the big green signs of the Commerce Bank building, the spired church with the green roof and the AT&T building! Oh my, I then realized that earlier as my husband and I were traveling down the freeway, we passed right over the place where Edwin's house had been. These three seemingly unimportant landmarks helped me to recognize the area in Google Earth. Do I have an explanation as to why I was to remember those landmarks? No. It wasn't necessary that I find Edwin's house, I was just curious. Being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, researching family history is important to me. I already had Edwin's temple work done, so why did this happen? The only thing I can think of is that Edwin was telling me he didn't want to be forgotten. He had no children to remember him so I guess I'm the only one that can see that his memory lives on. I have him on FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com and FindaGrave.com. He

won’t be forgotten. His records are online permanently for all to see. I have yet to find a photo of him so maybe that’s encouragement for me to continue searching for it. I bet it’s out there, so I will continue the search. [Update: Today 13 October 2021, I found a photo of Edwin at Newspapers.com. See attached]

Later I looked up the name of the green roofed Church. It's St. Mary's Episcopal Church. I thought maybe Edwin was a parishioner there so I discovered that the church records were at the Kansas City Public Library. Today, January 21st, 2020 Richard and I went to the library and I searched the records. I did not find Edwin's name listed anywhere. Even if Edwin and Hazel were not parishioners there, I wonder if they ever visited the Church. It's very beautiful inside.

I have another update on my experiences with researching Uncle Edwin. Today is 25 November 2021. It seems only appropriate to record this on Thanksgiving Day. As I stated earlier, I’ve felt a closeness to Edwin for a long time. He has seemed to be ever present on my mind and I could not understand why. I made sure the temple ordinance work had been submitted for his parents and brother. About 4 weeks ago I decided to research his ancestors and extended family. I discovered that there was already much research done by others on his line. I wanted to fill in some of the blanks so I looked for records in the Swedish records on FamilySearch and Ancestry.com. The Swedes kept many good records. Most of them were in Swedish of course, so I taught myself a little Swedish. I looked at Swedish word lists and complied my own word list. It became a little easier with a bit of

study. Learning to read how the census taker complied the Swedish Households took some time but I became familiar with the lines and marks and what they meant. After researching for about 3 weeks, I came to the end of what I could find on Edwin's ancestor's families. It was as complete as I could make it. All this time Edwin was ever on my mind. Even though others had researched Edwin's ancestors, I noticed that a good portion had never had temple ordinances performed for them. I started systematically, family by family, looking for those that needed their work submitted. I worked for many days making sure at least the minimum information was there and then submitted the work. I know there were at least a couple of days that I submitted probably 50 names a day. I don't know what the total was. (I don't keep track of such information.) After about a week of submitting all the names that qualified for work, I felt I was done. A couple of days later I noticed that I wasn't thinking of Uncle Edwin as much. I actually went a couple of days without thinking of him! My mind seemed to be at rest as far as Edwin was concerned. NOW I know why he was "bugging" me! He wanted the temple work done for HIS ancestors too! Just having his immediate family wasn't enough. He wanted everyone done! Edwin did not have any children to do the work for them so his great niece, me, had to be the one to do it. I'm so grateful that the Lord allows me to have these kinds of experiences. Each experience builds my testimony of the truthfulness of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.